

CLAIMS: Please amend the claims according to the status designations in the following list, which contains all claims that were ever in the application, with the text of all active claims.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for the optimization of a messaging system comprising a sending node and at least one receiving node, within a data network with a limited resource, comprising the steps of

a) assigning messages awaiting delivery to a receiving node a prioritization value at said sending node;

b) identifying selected messages awaiting delivery with a highest said prioritization value at said sending node;[[, and]]

c) ~~delivering~~ transmitting said selected messages to ~~an appropriate~~ said receiving node, and until ~~said limited resource is exhausted.~~

d) repeating steps (b) and (c) until said limited resource within said data network is exhausted.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications link between said sending node and said receiving node is intermittent, further comprising the step of storing said selected messages at said receiving node prior to a user request to ~~collect~~ download selected messages ~~from said messaging system~~, via said receiving node to a separate portable messaging unit, thereby proactively buffering selected messages at said receiving node.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of decomposing messages into message elements at said sending node, and then processing each said message element as an independent message with a separate prioritization value.

4. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, wherein decomposition divides messages into said

message elements comprising a) a header comprising at least a sender messaging address identifier and a message subject; b) a first message section, comprising no more than a predetermined amount of data, and c) a second message section.

5. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, wherein said prioritization value depends upon the type of said message element.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein the full text of said message is ~~provided to~~ proactively buffered at a set of messaging nodes that is a smaller subset of the messaging nodes ~~provided with a~~ where the header of said message is proactively buffered.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein said limited resource comprises communications time during a single communications session between said sending node and said receiving node.

8. (CANCELED)

9. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said limited resource comprises storage capacity on said receiving node.

10.-12. (CANCELED)

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein said prioritization value depends upon an association table value for relating said receiving node and a message recipient, wherein said receiving node is positively associated with a plurality of message recipients, and

transmitted messages are subsequently available for download from said receiving node to a portable messaging unit.

14. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said prioritization value depends upon the payment of a surcharge for the express delivery of said message.

15.-16. (CANCELED)

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein said prioritization value depends upon the predicted probability based upon prior behavior that said recipient will request the ~~collection~~ download of any incoming messages ~~[[at]]~~ via said receiving node to a portable messaging unit.

18.-20. (CANCELED)

21. (NEW) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitted messages are subsequently available for download from said receiving node to a portable messaging unit.

22. (NEW) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitted messages are subsequently available to the message recipient on a publicly accessible computer at said receiving node.

23. (NEW) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting at least one unsent message awaiting delivery at the time of resource exhaustion during a subsequent communications session between said sending node and said receiving node.

24. (NEW) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of proactively buffering said selected messages at said receiving node, temporarily disconnecting the communications link between said sending node and said receiving node, and while this communications link is disconnected, establishing a communications link between said receiving node and a portable messaging unit and transmitting proactively buffered messages from said receiving node to said portable messaging unit.

25. (NEW) The method of claim 24, wherein messages for a plurality of users are proactively buffered at said receiving node, and the step of transmitting proactively buffered messages to said portable messaging unit comprises only transmitting messages for a single first user.

26. (NEW) The method of claim 25, further comprising the steps of disconnecting the communications link between said receiving node and said portable messaging unit, and while the communications link between said sending node and receiving node remains disconnected, establishing a communications link between said receiving node and a second portable messaging unit and transmitting proactively buffered messages for a second user to said second portable messaging unit.

27. (NEW) A method for the optimization of a messaging system comprising a sending node and at least one messaging node, comprising the steps of

- a) assigning messages awaiting transmission to a messaging node a prioritization value at said sending node;
- b) establishing a communications link between said sending node and said messaging node;
- c) transmitting messages awaiting transmission from said sending node to said messaging node, in order of said prioritization value of said messages, where said first communications link is

broken before all messages awaiting delivery have been transmitted, and

d) proactively buffering transmitted messages at said messaging node for delivery to a plurality of respective message recipients while said first communications link remains broken.

28. (NEW) The method of claim 27, where said messaging system further comprises at least two portable messaging units, further comprising the steps of establishing a communications link between said messaging node and a first portable messaging unit while said first communications link between said sending node and said messaging node remains broken; transmitting proactively buffered messages for a first user to said first portable messaging unit; disconnecting the communications link between said messaging node and said first portable messaging unit; establishing a communications link between said messaging node and a second portable messaging unit while said communications link between said sending node and said messaging node remains broken; transmitting proactively buffered messages for a second user to said first portable messaging unit; disconnecting the communications link between said messaging node and said second portable messaging unit; subsequently re-establishing said first communications link between said sending node and said messaging node, and transmitting at least some messages from said sending node to said messaging node that were awaiting delivery when said first communications link was previously broken.

29. (NEW) The method of claim 28, wherein said messaging system further comprises a plurality of messaging nodes, and further comprising the steps of transmitting information from said messaging node to said sending node identifying a delivered message transmitted to a portable messaging unit via said messaging node; and transmitting from said sending node to at least one other messaging node a command to delete said delivered message from its proactive buffer.